

Message Text

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INFO WHITE HOUSE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 198055

WHITE HOUSE FOR DR. BOURNE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDEV, TBIO, PGOV, IZ, US

SUBJECT: IRAQI REQUEST FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

REF: STATE 190438

1. CURRENT U.S. POLICY IS TO SEEK NORMALIZATION OF U.S.-
IRAQI RELATIONS IN THE HOPES THAT WE COULD THEREBY EXERT
MORE EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE ON IRAQI REGIONAL AND OTHER
POLICIES WHICH HAVE BROUGHT US INTO OCCASIONAL CONFLICT.
CONSISTENT WITH THIS POLICY, WE ENCOURAGE A BROADENING OF
U.S.-IRAQI CONTACTS BY BOTH OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE CITIZENS,
AND AN EXPANSION OF RELATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF HEALTH,
MEDICINE, NUTRITION, COMMERCE, EDUCATION, ARCHEOLOGY, AND
SCIENCE. BEGINNING LATE LAST YEAR, DR. PETER BOURNE, NOW A
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SENIOR MEMBER OF THE WHITE HOUSE STAFF, MET PRIVATELY WITH
FOREIGN MINISTER HAMMADI AND THROUGH HIM MET WITH THE
IRAQI MINISTER OF HEALTH, WITH WHOM HE HAS REMAINED IN
CLOSE TOUCH. DR. BOURNE INDICATED AN INTEREST IN TRYING TO
BE HELPFUL TO THE IRAQIS IN THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH FIELDS,
AND THE MINISTER OF HEALTH RESPONDED IN A JUNE 12 LETTER TO
DR. BOURNE THAT HE WOULD WELCOME U.S. ASSISTANCE AND COOPER-

ATION IN CERTAIN AREAS (REFTEL). THIS LETTER MAY BE A STEP OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE IN THE EVOLUTION OF OUR RELATIONSHIP. WE CONVENED AN INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE TO REVIEW POTENTIAL COOPERATION IN THE HEALTH FIELD.

2. OUR VIEW IS THAT WE SHOULD REVEAL TO THE IRAQIS A WILLINGNESS TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE AND HELPFUL, BUT WITHOUT CROWDING THEM SO HARD AS TO CAUSE THEM EMBARRASSMENT. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS, INCLUDING THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, WE CANNOT USE REGULAR AID PROGRAMS. NEVERTHELESS, THE RESOURCES OF AID AND OTHER AGENCIES--EXCEPT FOR FUNDING--COULD BE EMPLOYED IN MUTUALLY USEFUL PROGRAMS. UNDER SECTION 607 OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT WE CAN DEVELOP PROGRAMS ON A REIMBURSABLE BASIS. THESE COULD INCLUDE INTER ALIA PLACEMENT IN INSTITUTIONS OF IRAQIS WHOSE EXPENSES WOULD BE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAQ. SUCH REIMBURSABLE PROGRAMS WOULD BE MANAGED BY AID IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER APPROPRIATE AGENCIES. THERE ARE OTHER AVENUES WE MIGHT USE, INCLUDING EXCHANGES OF INFORMATION AND AN AGENCY-TO-AGENCY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE IRAQI MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SUCH ORGANIZATIONS AS HEW, THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, AND SELECTED MEDICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTIONS.

3. AS A FIRST STEP IN EXPLORING WHAT MIGHT BE DONE, WE WISH TO SUGGEST A VISIT TO BAGHDAD BY A TEAM OF THREE TO FOUR PEOPLE HEADED BY DR. BOURNE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CONFIDENTIAL

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HOLIDAYS, COMMENCING ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17.

4. SINCE YOU DO NOT ORDINARILY HAVE DIRECT ACCESS TO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH TO PRESENT OUR PROPOSALS, WE ASSUME THAT YOU WOULD HAVE TO ARRANGE SUCH AN APPOINTMENT THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND, IN SO DOING, WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE SOME BACKGROUND ON THE NATURE OF THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND DR. BOURNE. THIS WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE IN SUCH A WAY AS NOT TO EMBARRASS THE MINISTER OF HEALTH WHO, FOR ALL WE KNOW, MAY HAVE GONE A BIT OUT ON A LIMB IN HIS JUNE 12 MESSAGE.

5. FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS YOU SHOULD CONVEY TO THE MINISTER OF HEALTH, ORALLY AND IN WRITING IF YOU BELIEVE APPROPRIATE. SUITABLY COMPRESSED, MOST OF THESE POINTS COULD BE GIVEN TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY BY WAY OF EXPLANATION FOR YOUR REQUEST FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE MINISTER.

-- THE U.S. IS AWARE OF THE RAPID PROGRESS IRAQ HAS BEEN MAKING IN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS. WE KNOW THAT THERE IS KEEN INTEREST IN IRAQ IN EXPANDING MEDICAL AND HEALTH FACILITIES. IT SEEMS TO US DESIRABLE

THAT THE U.S. TRY TO BE HELPFUL AS IRAQ MOVES FORWARD IN
ENHANCING ITS PUBLIC HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAMS.

-- DR. PETER BOURNE, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT,
IN PERSONAL MEETINGS WITH FONMIN HAMMADI AND IN LATER

MEETINGS AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE IRAQI MINISTER OF
HEALTH DR. RIAD I. HUSAIN, HAS COMMUNICATED OUR INTEREST.
WE WERE, THEREFORE, GRATIFIED WHEN THE MINISTER OF HEALTH
INDICATED IN TURN THAT IRAQ MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN U.S.
COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN CERTAIN MEDICAL AND PUBLIC
HEALTH FIELDS. WE ARE PREPARED TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILI-
TIES AT A DIPLOMATIC AND PROFESSIONAL LEVEL WITH IRAQ.
FOR THAT PURPOSE WE PROPOSE TO SEND TO BAGHDAD A
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TEAM OF THREE OR FOUR PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE HEADED BY
DR. BOURNE ARRIVING ON OR ABOUT SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 17.
OWING TO OTHER OBLIGATIONS, DR. BOURNE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE
IRAQ ON SEPTEMBER 20, BUT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM
COULD REMAIN FOR A FEW DAYS MORE, IF DESIRABLEE.

-- WE PROPOSE THESE SPECIFIC DATES BECAUSE THE HIGHLY
QUALIFIED PEOPLE WE COULD MAKE AVAILABLE FOR A VISIT AT
THE TIME WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE AGAIN UNTIL MID-OCTOBER
OR LATER.

-- THIS TEAM MIGHT EXPLORE WITH THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND
OTHER APPROPRIATE IRAQI OFFICIALS WAYS IN WHICH U.S.
RESOURCES COULD BE MADE HELPFUL TO IRAQI PROGRAMS IN THIS
IMPORTANT FIELD. WE EXPECT THAT THE EXPERTS ON THE TEAM
WOULD COVER SUCH FIELDS AS HEALTH, MANPOWER, COMMUNICABLE
DISEASES CONTROL, HEALTH AUXILLIARY WORKER TRAINING, LOW
COST DELIVERY SYSTEMS, AND OTHER AREAS OF INTEREST OT
IRAQ.

-- IT SHOULD BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE U.S. IS NOT NOW IN A
POSITION TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE TRAINING, FOR EXAMPLE,
WHICH THE MINISTER OF HEALTH MENTIONED IN HIS LAST LETTER
TO DR. BOURNE. THERE ARE WAYS, HOWEVER, UNDER WHICH THE
U.S. COULD HELP ADMINISTER COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS, THE
COST OF WHICH TO BE REIMBURSED BY IRAQ. UNDER SUCH A
REIMBURSABLE PROGRAM, THE FULL RESOURCES AND SKILLS OF
U.S. AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, COULD
BE MADE AVAILABLE.

-- THERE ARE OTHER PROGRAMS THE TEAM COULD DISCUSS WHICH
DO NOT INVOLVE FINANCIAL MATTERS, SUCH AS INFORMATION
EXCHANGES WITH THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE.
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-- OUR TEAM WILL BE FULLY QUALIFIED TO EXPLORE THE EXTENT
AND VARIETY OF SUCH COOPERATIVE PROGRAMS.

-- WHILE THE U.S. AND IRAQ DO NOT HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS,
THE U.S. BELIEVES THAT COOPERATION IN FIELDS WHICH ARE OF
DIRECT BENEFIT TO THE BASIC HUMAN NEEDS OF PEOPLE ARE PRO-
GRAMS OF GREAT INTEREST TO THE U.S. AND ARE WORTH FURTHER

EXPLORATION. THE ABSENCE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS SHOULD
NOT BE CONSIDERED A BARRIER TO COOPERATION IN SUCH
HUMANITARIAN FIELDS. VANCE

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